

## RECENT ABANDONED MINE LANDS ACCIDENTS

### 2008

**5/17/08 – O'Neals, CA:** Three men died over the weekend while attempting to reopen an abandoned Gold Rush-era mine to dig for gold in rural Madera County. Twenty-five-year-old David Alan Alison and 23-year-old Matthew Terry Alison – both from Prather – and 26-year-old Brannon David Scharf of Madera were found dead Saturday inside the 20-foot-deep mine. Cal Fire officials say the men were using a gasoline-powered pump to drain underground water from the mine in O'Neals, about 20 miles south of Oakhurst. Autopsies confirmed all men died of carbon monoxide poisoning.

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**1/20/08 – Phoenix, AZ:** A 19-year man was fatally injured after falling into a 35-foot abandoned mine shaft while riding quads with a group of friends. The site is about four miles from Tonto National Forest.



### 2007

**12/31/07 – Randsburg, CA:** An 11-year-old boy from Visalia fell 30 feet into a mine shaft, but thanks to rescue personnel, he celebrated the New Year with his family. Crews said they used what is called the technical rope rescue system. One firefighter repelled 30 feet into the shaft and other firefighters lowered a basket and ropes. Then, crew members basically pulled the boy to safety. About 20 Kern County firefighters, California City firefighters, and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) officials helped in rescue efforts. The boy was taken to Antelope Valley Medical Center with a broken bone.

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**9/3/07 – Chloride, AZ:** A 13-year-old girl was fatally injured and her 10-year-old sister was seriously injured when the all-terrain vehicle (ATV) they were riding fell 125 feet down an abandoned mine shaft in northwest Arizona. The young girls were riding with their father, who was ahead of them on a motorcycle. Their father noticed they were missing and went back to find them, but to no avail. They were discovered the next day at the bottom of the mine shaft, and a rope rescue team descended the vertical mine shaft to reach them. This site is adjacent to a BLM trail that is not authorized for motor vehicle use.

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**Attachment 2-1**

**5/3/07:** A 63-year-old man on a rock-hunting excursion with his wife was killed when his Jeep rolled off a narrow trail into an abandoned mining pit in Virginia City. The Storey County sheriff's office said that Alvin Ellwood Baldwin of Occidental, California, was trying to maneuver the vehicle on a narrow trail above the Loring Pit when he lost control and rolled 500 feet into the pit. Baldwin was ejected and pronounced dead at the scene. The man's wife had gotten out of the Jeep because the route was too treacherous.

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**01/21/07 – Columbus, NM:** A group of specially trained border patrol agents helped rescue a migrant who had fallen 50 feet into an old mine shaft. The man fell while walking along the border in a remote area. While the 26-year-old man suffered serious injuries, agents also were concerned because it was only 28 degrees during this early-morning rescue. Add to that, off and on freezing rain and snow made the situation even more dangerous according to agent Hitchcock. "If Border Patrol and BORSTAR were not notified sooner, there is a possibility that he could have died of hypothermia out there," Hitchcock said.

## 2006

### **TWO ACCIDENTS AT THE SAME SITE!**

**4/15/06 – Yermo, CA:** Rescuers were called to an abandoned mine Friday afternoon, exactly one week after another man fell down the same shaft, dying from the fall.

**4/9/06 – Yermo, CA:** Kenneth "Rusty" Lasley, 41, of Vista, died of injuries sustained in a fall down an abandoned mine shaft Friday, the San Bernardino Coroner's office said. Lasley and his 7-year-old son, who was not identified, were exploring the Calico Mountains north of Yermo in an ATV when they came upon the abandoned mine in a remote, rugged area. Lasley ventured about 60 feet into a horizontal mine shaft, then fell into a vertical mine shaft, estimated as being 30 to 50 yards deep, according to San Bernardino Sheriff's Sgt. Doug Hubbard. The young boy rode his ATV to one of the few homes nearby, 2 or 3 miles from the mine shaft, to seek help and the homeowners called deputies. At 12:30 p.m., sheriff's deputies, county fire personnel, and two sheriff's helicopters were dispatched to the area where the mine shaft extends an estimated 100 feet into the mountain. Lasley's body was recovered at 8:30 p.m., 8 hours after the first call came in to the Sheriff's Department regarding the accident.



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**03/12/06:** A driver and passenger on a Suzuki Samurai off-highway vehicle (OHV), who traveled off-road in a designated "limited use area" on public lands in the California Desert's eastern Imperial County, fell down an abandoned vertical mineshaft, and spent 20 hours in the shaft before they were rescued. The driver suffered a possible broken arm; his passenger was unharmed. The accident apparently occurred Sunday; a search and rescue was initiated Sunday night when the two men failed to return to their camp as expected. The Bureau of Land Management received a call at 8:30 a.m. on Monday and a geologist and ranger responded. The driver and passenger were extracted, but BLM's El Centro Field Office rangers had to arrange a crane to lift out the Suzuki.